



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AFGHANISTAN

Education

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The Accelerated Learning Program provides an opportunity for the out-of-school and over aged children. Thousands of girls and boys have enrolled in the project since 2002.

EDUCATION SNAPSHOT

- 170,000 students enrolled in accelerated learning program, 58% girls
- 524 schools have been constructed or refurbished and completing 130 more
- 49 million text books were translated in Dari and Pashtu and printed and distributed
- 15,360 teachers, professors and community based teachers and 124 teacher trainers and administrators trained
- 6,500 teachers trained via radio

BACKGROUND

Afghanistan has one of the highest illiteracy rates in the world. In rural areas, where three-fourths of all Afghans live, 90% of the women and 63% of the men are illiterate. Nearly three-quarters of Afghans over the age of 15 cannot read or write. Under the Taliban, girls were not allowed to go to school and many boys received religious education in lieu of academics. The legacy of prohibiting women to work and men fighting wars meant a lack of technical job skills for the majority of the population. The implications of this lack of education can be felt in all domains of life. For example, Afghans lacked access to information about good health practices; and most of the country's judges do not have more than a high school degree.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

USAID's education strategy was designed in 2002 to meet the urgent need for textbooks, schools, new curricula, and trained teachers. Under the Taliban girls and boys were denied an education. USAID funded an accelerated learning program providing a chance for students denied an education to get caught up to their appropriate grade level. The program assistance was extended for another year for students to complete sixth grade. The education program was expanded to include radio-based teacher training, higher education programs and literacy training for workforce development. In 2004, new education projects were designed to meet the educational needs of Afghanistan.

IMPROVING BASIC EDUCATION

Increasing access to quality primary and secondary schools is a program priority. USAID is improving basic education through programs aimed at strengthening ministry capacity, improving teacher performance and skills development, and ensuring adequate school materials and environments for learning.

Because Afghans lost years of formal schooling under the Taliban, many students are not at their appropriate grade level. USAID created an accelerated learning program, compressing two years of study into a single year, through innovative teaching techniques. This program, and the new 2006-2010 programs, builds on past successes such as training approximately 15,360 teachers, professors, and community-based teachers, as well as 124 teacher trainers and administrators. To support curriculum needs, USAID printed and distributed over 49 million textbooks nationwide in Dari and Pashto for grades 1-12. In 2006, USAID provided funding for over 11 million new curriculum textbooks for grades 1, 2, 4, and 5.

SUPPORTING HIGHER EDUCATION

USAID, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education, has developed a Strategic Plan for 2006 to 2010



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Education (continued)



Afghan girls return to school. An estimated 170,000 students who were denied an education under the Taliban have returned to classes through USAID's Accelerated Learning Program. More than half of the students are girls.



Students receive new textbooks. USAID published 48.5 million textbooks in Dari and Pashto and is currently printing 11 million new school books.

which has expanded programs and introduced new initiatives including linkage of universities, and providing technical assistance to targeted institutions. USAID supports the American University of Afghanistan, a private English language American-style university in Kabul, with an expected enrollment of up to 1,000 students in 2008. A war-damaged Women's Dormitory at Kabul University was recently repaired and is now operational—accommodating over 1,100 women, mainly from rural areas. USAID also supports the International School of Kabul with an enrollment of 270 students, 75% Afghan.

At 16 universities, USAID will upgrade the teacher training. In addition USAID works with Balkh University Faculty of Agriculture (BUFA) in Mazar-e-Sharif to modernize curriculum, teaching technologies, and techniques. Electronic partnership with universities worldwide will develop Afghans' technical skills and knowledge, boosting their ability to participate in the global economy while building and build their nation at home.

EXPANDING NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Afghanistan has one of the highest illiteracy rates in the world. In many villages, 95-100% of the women cannot read or write. While USAID's accelerated learning program re-integrates out-of-school children into the formal educational system, USAID's large scale literacy and occupational skills program takes place outside the formal educational system and focuses on providing literacy and skills training to older girls and women.

Over 9,500 students learned functional literacy, economic self-reliance, grassroots democracy and women's right through a Literacy and Community Empowerment Program. Another 8,200 women learned literacy skills and health education in a Learning for Life program, of which 300 qualified for further training as community health workers or midwives. The establishment of the Women's Teacher Training Institute in Kabul also provides Afghans with access to training, materials, and modern teaching techniques. It supports the development of practical literacy, numeracy, and life skills. New projects will expand literacy training in rural communities.

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION

In conjunction with the Ministry of Education, USAID is building schools in rural areas. Since 2002, USAID has built or refurbished 524 schools, mostly in remote areas. Another 130 are currently under construction.